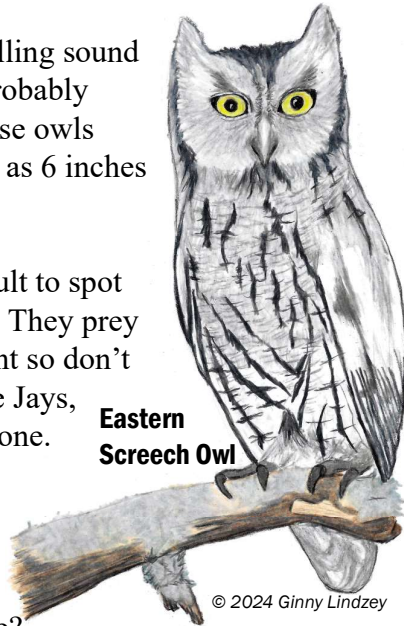


# Eastern Screech-Owls

If you have heard a high pitched trilling sound off in the trees at night, you have probably heard an Eastern Screech-Owl. These owls are little, with males being as small as 6 inches tall and females larger at 9 inches.

Eastern Screech-Owls can be difficult to spot since they are so well camouflaged. They prey on small mammals and birds at night so don't be surprised if by day you find Blue Jays, titmice, and chickadees mobbing a one.

Eastern Screech-Owls are cavity nesters and will readily nest in a hollow tree or nesting box between March and June. Have you seen one?



# Keeping Birds Safe in Your Yard

Join John Schaust and Brian Cunningham as they discuss preparing for our springtime feathered visitors and how to ensure that they are safe and can thrive in our yards.

*Nature Centered* is a podcast from **Wild Birds Unlimited** about feeding the birds and enjoying nature right in your own backyard. Relax, enjoy the birds, and stay Nature Centered.

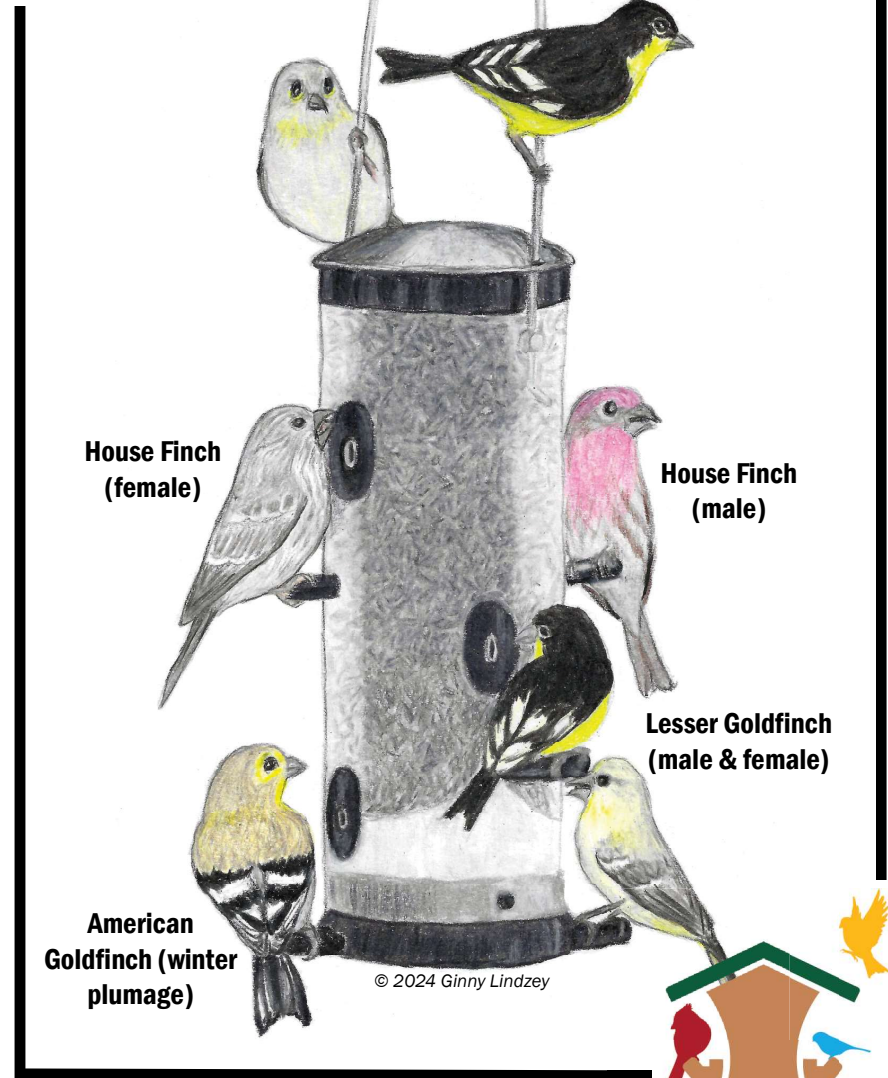
The logo for "Nature Centered" features a stylized bird icon above the text "Nature centered" in a white script font on a green background. Below this, the text "Relax &amp; Enjoy the Birds" is written in white. At the bottom is the logo for "Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop", which includes a house icon with a bird flying above it and the text "Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop" in green and black.

[austinsouth.wbu.com/nature-centered-onewbu](http://austinsouth.wbu.com/nature-centered-onewbu)



March 2024

# Finch Feast!



Wild Birds Unlimited  
Austin, TX

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- back** Nature Centered Podcast: Keeping Birds Safe in Your Yard

## Little Flyers

This is our 12th and perhaps last issue of *Little Flyers*, a zine designed for kids and their families. We provide fun information and activities on a monthly basis tailored to our seasonal focus.

*Little Flyers* is a unique publication for the **Wild Birds Unlimited** South Austin located at 3535 Bee Caves Road in Westlake Hills. Come visit us in person or online at [austinsouth.wbu.com](http://austinsouth.wbu.com) for upcoming events, birding news, feeders, bird seed, nesting boxes, and more.

The *Little Flyers* zine is created and edited by Ginny Lindzey. If you are enjoying *Little Flyers*, let us know! You can contact us at [wbuastinsouth@gmail.com](mailto:wbuastinsouth@gmail.com).

## Upcoming Events

Join us on **Saturday, March 16th**, for our **Bird Feeder Cleaning Clinic**. Assistant Manager Heidi Williams will have her cleaning station set up in front of the store from **11 a.m. until 2 p.m.** to help you take apart your feeders—especially your Squirrel Busters—so you can brush them out, scrub them clean, and do a final rinse in a 10% bleach solution to kill any microbes.

## BIRD JOKES

How does a bird with a broken wing manage to land safely? *With its sparrowchute.*

Why did the little bird get in trouble at school? *Because he was caught tweeting on a test.*

## Get Ready for Nesting Season

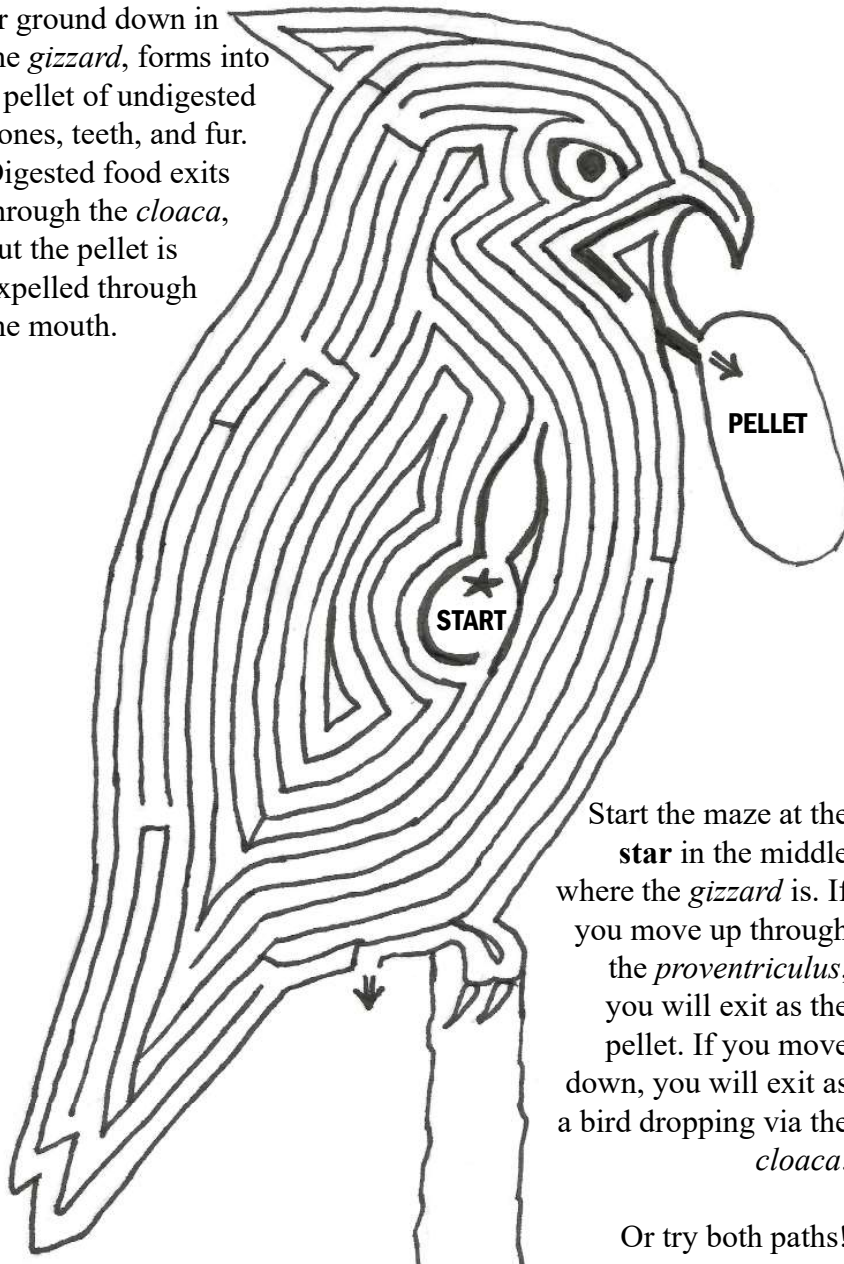


- |             |                    |                        |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| owl         |                    |                        |
| wren        |                    |                        |
| dove        |                    |                        |
| woodpecker  |                    |                        |
| house finch |                    |                        |
| goldfinch   | bird feeder        | bird bath              |
| chickadee   | Nesting SuperBlend | water                  |
| titmouse    | mealworms          | Drip-or-Mist           |
| hummingbird | sunflower seeds    | bird house             |
| sparrow     | peanuts            | nest building material |

S Q D W J B A S L H C G D Z S H S J U E  
D B P A Y B I W O R N J S D Z P G V V D  
E I C L A P O R Z A O Y G T A Q E N I N  
E R E E O P M U D T T J O R I T E R R E  
S D B I M K E Z D F T G R U M H V E P L  
R B S D E A I A N A E O Z H C U O K H B  
E A X T V S K D N P W E E H B M D C R R  
W T G K S I U X D U S Y D Q P M R E E E  
O H W O D I W O G H T N G E A I E P T P  
L M C R L D M Y H V X S P X R N C D A U  
F V F P E D V R T D R R R F Z G X O W S  
N Y L J Y N F K O V R C Y B T B Y O G G  
U I B A P I G I Q P I I P X S I R W W N  
S F P V P A P S N Q I N B C G R S K T I  
X V H E E I B O V C N R O M E D X A N T  
S M R O W L A E M A H Z D T M F C L B S  
W U I S S N K C H I C K A D E E S V I E  
E I C Z P V L H B F E S U O M T I T V N  
L A I R E T A M G N I D L I U B T S E N  
L C H C N I F E S U O H L E W K H U O Q

# Two Ways Out

Owls eat their food whole, including bones, teeth, and fur. What doesn't get broken down by digestive juices in the *proventriculus* or ground down in the *gizzard*, forms into a pellet of undigested bones, teeth, and fur. Digested food exits through the *cloaca*, but the pellet is expelled through the mouth.



Start the maze at the **star** in the middle where the *gizzard* is. If you move up through the *proventriculus*, you will exit as the pellet. If you move down, you will exit as a bird dropping via the *cloaca*.

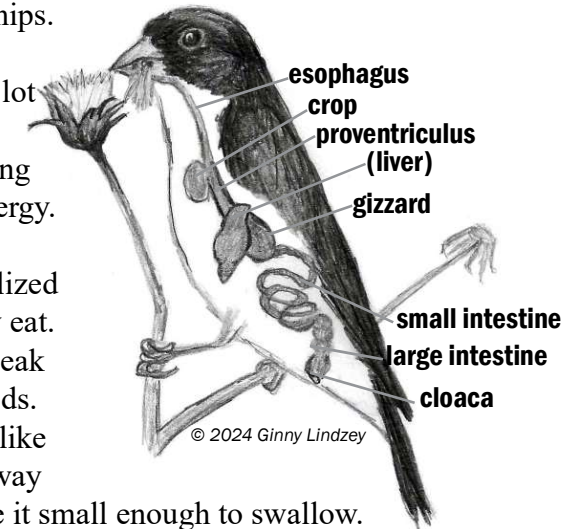
Or try both paths!

# Finches & Feasting

Chances are that you have two if not all three of the different finches illustrated on the front cover visiting your bird feeders right now—Lesser Goldfinches, American Goldfinches, and House Finches. Finches are happy to feast together, dining on Nyger (thistle) or sunflower chips.

Birds like finches eat a lot because flying, staying warm at night, and laying eggs require tons of energy.

Birds' beaks are specialized for the type a food they eat. For finches, a conical beak is perfect for eating seeds. While they can't chew like we do, they can chip away at a larger seed to make it small enough to swallow.



The seed travels down the *esophagus* and is stored in the *crop*. The *crop* is a type of holding area which allows a bird to consume a lot at once but not digest everything immediately.

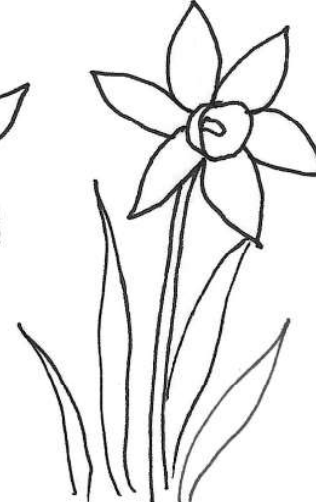
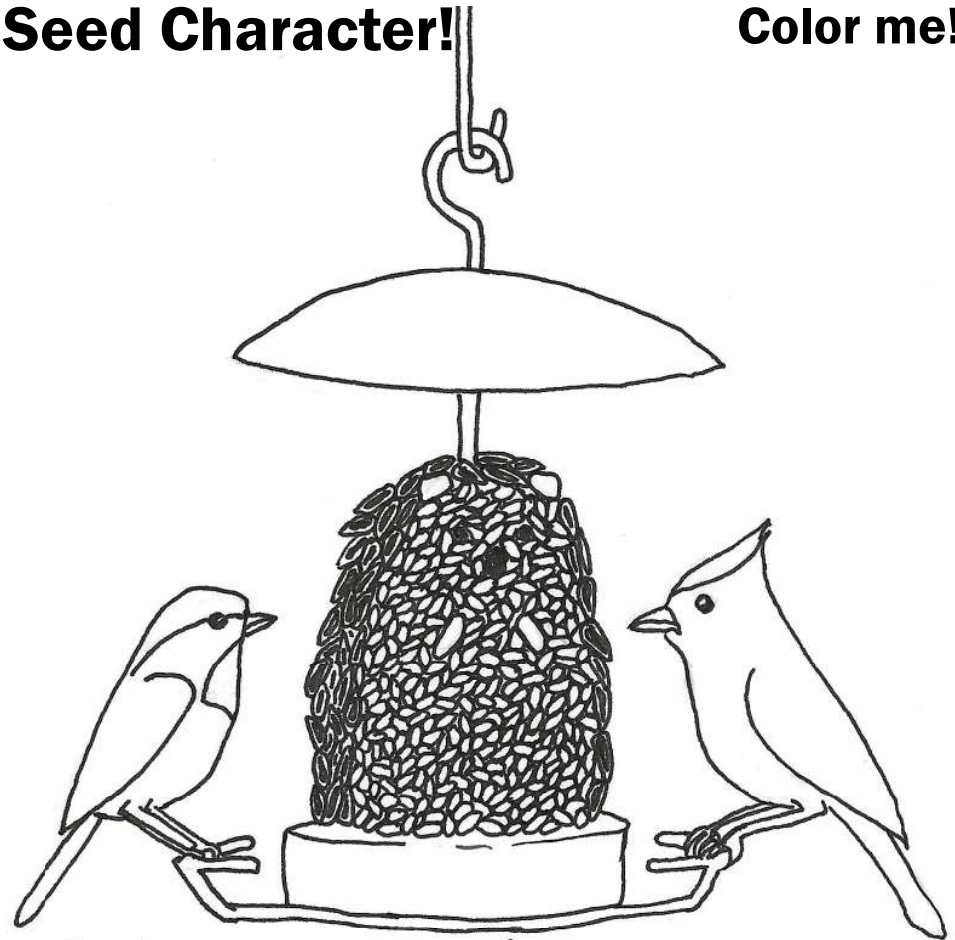
From there, the seed goes to the first stomach chamber, the *proventriculus*, where digestive juices begin to break down the food. The second stomach chamber, the *gizzard*, is muscular and grinds the food down. Sometimes birds will swallow gravel or grit which will help in the grinding process in the *gizzard*.

Finally, the nutrients are ready for absorption in *gizzard* and the *small intestine*. What remains passes through the *large intestine* and out through the *cloaca*.

Rapid digestion enables birds to replace energy quickly and efficiently. Happy feasting!

**Say Hi to Harry the Hedgehog Seed Character!**

**Color me!**



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